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SUBJECT: CODEL HOEKSTRA'S MEETING WITH IRAQI LEGISLATORS

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR MARGARET M. SCOBAY, FOR REASONS 1.4
(B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. In a July 15 meeting with CODEL Hoekstra, a small group of Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish Council of Representatives (CoR) members blamed the USG for not establishing security and stability in Iraq. Mohammed Taqi al-Mawla (Shia Coalition) warned of serious consequences if security is not established soon. Saleem al-Jaboori (Tawafuq) recommended that the U.S. Congress establish a committee to investigate how U.S. aid to Iraq has been spent. Sarteeb al-Kakai (Kurdish Alliance) presented a more conciliatory view, suggesting that everyone involved shares responsibility. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) On July 15, Representatives Hoekstra (R-Mich.), Gutknecht (R.-Minn.), Rogers (R-Mich.), Pomeroy (D.-N.D.) and Shays (R.-Conn.) met at the Convention Center with Council of Representatives (CoR) members Mohammed Taqi al-Mawla (Shia Coalition - SCIRI), Sarteeb al-Kakai (Kurdish Alliance - KDP), Saleem al-Jaboori (Tawafuq - IIP) and Hashim al-Ta'ee (Tawafuq - IIP).

¶3. (C) Mohammed Taqi Al-Mawla repeatedly emphasized the lack of security in Iraq. He said that in the last two and one half years security and stability have been lost and are now "nonexistent." According to Al-Mawla, security is worse this month than it was last month, and worse this year than last year. Al-Mawla blamed MNF-I, and in particular the USG, for the lack of security. He asked what the USG's plan for security was. He warned that if security is not established soon, there may be serious consequences including demands for the withdrawal of the MNF-I.

¶4. (C) Saleem al-Jaboori said there is a feeling among educated Iraqis that the U.S. came to Iraq only to preserve American interests. He charged that American military forces in Iraq have evolved from protecting Iraqis to only protecting themselves.

¶5. (C) Al-Jaboori asked a series of rhetorical questions about the current situation in Iraq: How have Iraqis benefited from U.S.-mandated reforms in the oil sector? How have Iraqis benefited from the oil revenue? Where is the building boom? Why is unemployment so high? How are the universities doing? He suggested that the visiting Congressional representatives should ask about these issues. He further suggested that the Congress form a committee to enforce accountability for the American money spent in Iraq.

¶6. (C) Sarteeb Al-Kakai was less critical than the other two

CoR members. He said that the Saddam regime fell quickly and that Iraqis had been ill-prepared for the new government because they had no previous experience with democracy. He said that the international community, including the USG, were involved in an "important experiment" in Iraq and that it is the responsibility of everyone involved, including the Iraqis, to contain the security situation.

COMMENT

17. (C) Other CoR members have made more balanced comments to CODELs about the security situation and the U.S. role. Al-Mawla and Al-Jaboori's comments, however, cannot be attributed to voices on the margins of the Assembly. As witnessed by recent walkouts from the assembly, abductions, cross-sectarian killings and other security incidents have become the main preoccupation of the CoR, distracting members from the legislative agenda.
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